Best, Elsdon - The Maori
School of Learning

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THE MAORI SCHOOL OF LEARNING:

Its Objects, Methods, and Ceremonial.

BY

ELSDON BEST.

"Hei pupuri i te aho o te wananga
Hei kawe i te kura huna a Rua."

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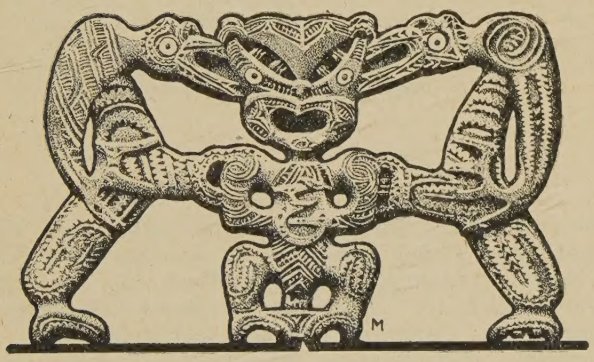

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THE WHARE WANANGA, OR MAORI SCHOOL OF LEARNING:

Its Objects, Methods, and Ceremonial.

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MANY years' study of Maori lore has led me to select the following subjects as presenting highly interesting illustrations and evidence of the mentality, history, institutions, and achievements of the race: (1) Asiatic-Polynesian parallels; (2) Polynesian deep-sea voyages; (3) mental and spiritual concepts; (4) genius for personification; (5) the *whare wananga*.

The subject of Asiatic-Polynesian parallels—that is to say, of usages, customs, myths, rites, beliefs, and conceptions common to the peoples of these two regions—is one of much interest, and a revelation to the student. To note that the Maori at our door has for long centuries taught quaint old-time myths of Babylonia—the story of Eve and the serpent, the fashioning of the first human being from earth, the name of the Supreme Being in southern Asia of olden times—is to marvel at parallel workings of the human mind, or at the wondrous powers of deep-sea voyagers in the far-off centuries that lie behind.

The story of Polynesian navigators, of ancient and modern times, is the wonder-story of the great Pacific. All ignorant of the use of metals, of the mariners' compass, of the true art of shipbuilding, the Polynesian pathfinder was the most daring of neolithic navigators and explorers in the history of mankind. Manning his rude vessels of dug-out type, fitted with top-strakes secured carvel-wise, he rode out on the rolling waterways of Hine-moana, the Ocean Maid, to explore the vast unknown area of the great Pacific. Firmly believing in the protective powers of his gods, laying his course by the heavenly bodies and the regular roll of ocean waves before the trade-winds, he opened up the *ara moana*, or sea roads, of the Great Ocean of Kiwa, and tied a thousand isles together with the wake of his lean *prau*. From Hawaii to New Zealand, from lone Easter Island to New Caledonia, his palm-leaf sails flecked many seas, his questing prow marked the strand of many far-spread isles.

Again, what more interesting subject than the spiritual and mental concepts of the Maori, the former based on immaterial functions and qualities, the latter on material organs of the human body! How remarkable are their conceptions of the spiritual potentiae of man, their definition of the physical life-principle, the innate, sacred, and talismanic *mauri ora!* What neolithic folk has evolved so remarkable a concept of the Supreme Being, and what people have so well preserved the purity of such concept? How they did so, and so proved themselves more conservative than those Asiatics who degraded Jehovah to the level of a tribal war-god, the *whare wananga* shall tell us. As also of the *awe* of the *wairua*, the refined essence of the human soul; of the Dawn Maid protecting the soul of man in the spirit-world; of the golden spirit path laid down by Tane-te-waiora athwart the heaving breast of the Ocean Maid.

Yet another theme of interest is represented by the extraordinary genius displayed by the Maori folk for personification. Dr. Shortland remarked on the lack of the power of abstraction in the Maori — whereas he possesses that power to a very remarkable extent. The superior gods of the Maori are personified forms of natural phenomena; his mythology and religion teem with such personifications, and with mythopoetic allegories; no people known to us have excelled the Polynesians in evolving such quaint concepts. Observe the charming myth of Tane and the Dawn Maid; the story of the Mist Maid and Uenuku (the Rainbow); the concepts of the Wind Children, the Cloud Children, and the Children of Light. Peruse the myth of the grey old Earth Mother calling to her stricken offspring to return to her and find rest: she who refused to remember their rebellion in the days when the world was young; who said, "I brought them forth to the World of Light, in death shall they find rest with me. Though they have erred and rebelled against me, yet are they still my children. Mine be the care of the dead." And the Maori will tell you that this saying of the primal Mother was the first evidence of the mother-love that outlives all races and all creeds, as exemplified in a terse aphorism

of yore, "*He aroha whaereere, he potiki piripoho*" ("A mother's love, a breast-clinging child").

Scan these and many other such myths, and say where the faculty of abstraction and the mythopoetic mind are more in evidence. Is it in the classic mythology of Greece, or among the beer-soaked gods of Teutonic savages, or the many-headed monstrosities of the Orient, or in Celtic folk-lore?

Ere entering the School of Learning we will emphasize a few salient points that should be kept in view. In the first place, we must recognize the fact that there are often two different versions of Maori myths—that is to say, of the higher-class myths, as distinct from ordinary folk-lore. There are, for example, two widely differing versions of cosmogonic and anthropogenic myths pertaining to the origin of the universe and of man. In the one case the universe was brought into being by means of the direct agency of the great demiurge, Io the Supreme Being. In the other, the primal parents, Rangi and Papa, or Sky and Earth, were the result of an evolutionary process, which was explained in the form of a cosmogonic genealogy. Now, it was always the superior version of a myth that was taught by the higher School of Learning. That school was a remarkably conservative institution, and the high-class cult of Io was confined to the superior order of priestly experts and to superior families. This fact explains how it was that the aforesaid cult of Io was saved from deterioration. Inferior or puerile versions of myths were acquired by the ordinary people; superior versions were retained by the few.

A word as to the powers of memory possessed by the Maori, upon which hinged the success of the School of Learning. Highly developed were the memorizing powers of these folk. Ignorant of any form of script, cut off from all knowledge of superior civilizations, the Maori depended entirely on memory, on oral tradition, on verbal teaching, in preserving all prized lore and in passing it on to his descendants. The School of Learning was the result of the strong desire to conserve such matter in its original purity. Let me give two examples of Maori memorizing-powers. During the winter of 1896 I obtained from an old native of the Ruatahuna district the words of no less than 406 songs, together with much information of an explanatory nature pertaining to them. All these songs were given from memory—not one was in written form. Again, when Tamarau Waiari appeared before the Land Commission at Ruatoki in order to explain the claim of his clan to certain lands, he traced the descent of his people from an ancestor who flourished thirty-four generations ago. The result was a long table of innumerable branch lines, of a multitude of affinitive ramifications. This marvellous recital occupied the attention of the Commission for three days. The old man gave much evidence as to occupation, extra-tribal marriages, &c., and the genealogical table contained well over fourteen hundred names of persons.

It is now high time that we entered our School of Learning and so became acquainted with its objects, methods, and ritual.

The *tapu* School of Learning instituted and maintained in various parts of Polynesia attained a very remarkable status in New Zealand. Moreover, a study of its activities and objects serves to impress us with a conviction that the barbaric Maori had acquired a reverence for what he deemed to be high-class learning, and looked upon the teachers and conservers thereof as highly important members of the tribal commune. A somewhat parallel case may be cited in the attitude of our own forefathers toward the Asiatic myths of what we may call the manufacture of man—the Garden of Eden, Eve and the serpent, the Deluge, &c., and toward the teachers of those myths.

Inasmuch as in Maori belief all esoteric knowledge was connected with the gods, it follows as a natural sequence that such occult knowledge, with its human repositories, also partook of, or were imbued with, the condition of *tapu*. In no department or phase of native life was that awe-inspiring institution or quality more in evidence than in the conduct of the School of Learning, in which were conserved the teachings of gods and men. The more intensely sacred subjects included all matters pertaining to the Supreme Being, to the higher phases of religious belief and practices, and the superior version of cosmogonic myths. A people such as ourselves, who make our Bible as common as the daily newspaper, simply cannot conceive the veneration the Maori felt for such knowledge as the above—that is to say, the inner teachings, the superior versions, such as were taught in the School of Learning.

At the same time, what may be termed inferior forms of knowledge were also preserved by the same institution, such as historical traditions. For instance, when Polynesian voyagers visited other lands than their own, more especially when any remarkable voyage took place, a record of such occurrences was preserved by the keepers of the unwritten archives. Moreover, it is a noticeable fact that the accounts of such matters so preserved are much more faithful, much less encrusted with myth, than popular versions preserved by the people.

We are all aware that the Maori possessed no graphic system, no form of script by means of which accumulations of knowledge might be recorded and so handed on to succeeding generations. It was this fact that rendered the School of Learning such a useful and important institution, inasmuch as it conserved all oral tradition, all prized lore, and transmitted the same, unaltered, to posterity. Bearing in mind the exceedingly *tapu* nature of high-class knowledge, the revered forms of such, it is just possible that had the Maori evolved or borrowed any system of writing he would have refrained from committing such lore to that medium. We know that this was actually the case in India, where, for long centuries after the acquirement of a written tongue, knowledge of the holy Vedas was acquired orally and transmitted verbally by the priests. It may, however, be justly remarked that I am here entering the realms of conjecture. We do nevertheless know this: that those teachings of the Orient were deemed too sacred to be recorded by means of any form of script.

The object of the School of Learning was to preserve all desirable knowledge pertaining to the subjects already mentioned, and other traditional lore, and to hand it down the centuries free of any alteration, omission, interpolation, or deterioration. The ideal was a highly-pitched one; it called for ceaseless care and vigilance on the part of the keepers of the unwritten racial and tribal lore. Any form of change, any departure from old teachings, was strongly disapproved of, and any questioning of ancient teachings was held to be a grievous affront to Tane, the origin and patron of all high-class knowledge. In this particular connection it is Tane who is mentioned, and not Rua, who is the personified form of knowledge, its diffusion and acquirement. This being occupies a lower plane than does Tane—he who sought the true source of knowledge in the uppermost heaven.

The original *whare wananga*, and assuredly the most important of all, was that known as Rangiatea, which pertained to the Toi o nga Rangi, the uppermost of the twelve bespaced heavens. This repository of sacred lore was that of Io, the Supreme Being—Io-te-wananga, the ultimate source of all knowledge and of all beings, condition, and things of the universe. Rangiatea was a special care of the *whatukura* and *mareikura*, the male and female denizens of that celestial realm, who were the attendants of Io. In connection with this *tapu* repository, apparently, was a marvellous magic stone, by looking at or into which Io was enabled to see whatever conditions prevailed in all parts of the universe. The name of Rangiatea is one well known to the Maori. It was assigned to the Maori church at Otaki, and was the original name of the isle of eastern Polynesia now known as Ra'iatea.

We now come to the second *whare wananga*—the first that was known in this world. We are told that the form or semblance of this edifice was obtained from Rangi-tamaku, the second of the twelve heavens, counting upwards. This knowledge was obtained by Tane, Paia, and Rongo-marae-roa, three members of the offspring of the primal parents, Rangi and Papa. This first repository of knowledge on earth was known as *Whare-kura*, a name that was often applied to Schools of Learning in later ages. The word *kura* was employed to denote anything highly prized, and so the name might be rendered as "treasure house." This original home of learning of this world was situated at Te Hono-i-wairua, at Hawaiki-nui, a peculiarly sacred place in the far-distant land of Irihia, the homeland of the Polynesian race. It is at that revered place that the souls of the dead are subjected to a purificatory rite ere they pass on to one of the two spirit-worlds. The name of Tapu-te-ranga seems to be also applied to the same place, and, curiously enough, this is the old native name of Watchman Isle at Napier, as also of the islet at Island Bay, Wellington.

It was Rua-te-pupuke (a personification of knowledge) who brought *Whare-kura* into being, and one Nuku-te-aio was its principal expert, while Tane, Tupai, and others were the *poutiriao*, or guardians, of this house of learning. In it was conserved all

sacred lore pertaining to Io, to the twelve heavens, and to the twenty-four companies of supernatural male and female denizens of those heavens—hence the excessive sacredness of *Whare-kura;* while within it were performed the sacred rites pertaining to the cult of Io. It is explained that the place is situated on the summit of a mountain, the ascent of which occupied two days. This mountain is known as Irirangi, and apparently other names were also applied to it. It is sometimes alluded to as Irihia, the name of the land in which it is situated; and also, apparently, as the Tihi o Manono and Maungaharo. Yet other myths contain the name of Tihi o Manono as that of a place in Rangi-naonao-ariki, the tenth of the twelve heavens. This Mount Irirangi is the abode of the Rua brethren, a numerous band, who are the personified forms of knowledge, its acquirement and diffusion. There also, on the sacred summit of that sacred mountain, the bodies of the offspring of the Earth Mother and Sky Father are said to be lying. On that peak were chanted and performed all invocations and rites pertaining to Io, the Supreme Being, the *whatukura* and *mareikura* of the uppermost heaven, and all the supernatural denizens of the other eleven heavens. All the specially important and *tapu hakari* or ceremonial gatherings, rites, and feasts were held on the summit of that holy mountain. The spirit-house Hawaiki-nui, also known as Hawaiki-rangi, Hawaiki-whakaeroero, and Whare-kura (the House of the Four-way Path), is situated on that summit, and in it were preserved the two sacred stones known as the Whatukura a Tane and the Whatukura a Tangaroa.

Another famed repository of knowledge was the "house" known as Tai-whetuki, situated at Te Pakaroa. This place belonged to Whiro, the opponent of Tane. Whiro is the dread being who represents evil, darkness, and death, also all pernicious activities such as black magic; while his emissaries, the Maiki brethren, are the personified forms of disease. In Tai-whetuki is conserved the knowledge of all evil forces by means of which food-supplies, birds, fish, mortal man, and supernormal beings are destroyed. It was the origin of the noxious *whare maire,* or school of black magic, of this world. It is the place where man is lost, struck down by Maiki-nui; it is the House of Death.

The following is a list of names of some of the more famous of old-time *whare wananga,* as preserved by the Kahungunu folk of the eastern coast-line of the North Island:—

Wharau-rangi. Situated in the land of Irihia. Timu-whakairihia was a leading expert of this school.

Taketake o te whenua. Situated at Tawhiti-roa, the first land in which the ancestors of the Maori settled after leaving Irihia.

Te Kohurau. Situated at Hawaiki. Wehi-nui-o-mamao and Whare-patari were experts of this place.

Te Rangi-aio. Situated at Hawaiki. Kahutia-te-rangi was an expert of this house.

Te Kohurau II. This was the school (*i.e.,* the curriculum) that was brought to New Zealand. Ruawharo and Te Rongo-patahi were its experts at that time.

Rangi-te-auria. Situated at Maunga-wharau, in New Zealand. Kaewa was an expert of this school. The *whare maire* of that district was named Paewhenua.

Whariki-awatea. Situated at Heretaunga. Tu-te-ma-hurangi was an expert of this house.

Te Ra-wheoro. Situated at Uawa. In days of yore Hingangaroa was an expert here. The *whare maire* was named Te Wharau. Ira was, in his time, an expert of this school.

Tapere nui a Whatonga. Situated near East Cape.

Te Poho o Hine-pae. Situated at Wai-rarapa. Marokainga-kore and Te Moko-tahou were two of its experts.

We also hear of two other schools on the east coast named Te Tuahu and Whare-korero.

Tradition tells us that the ancestors of the Maori migrated from Tawhiti-roa and sailed across wide seas until they came to Ahu, to Maui, and to Hawaiki-a-Ruamatua, and then to Aotea-roa, or New Zealand. The Hawaiki mentioned is the Isle of Tahiti, and from that centre the people spread and occupied Rangiatea, Rarotonga, Te Pakaroa, and other isles, including Aotea-roa. Other recitals seems to show that Te Pakaroa was a place-name at one of the Society Isles. The Maunga-wharau School of Learning is said to have been the first instituted here by the Takitumu immigrants, after which Te Anawhakairo was instituted, in the South Island.

The Takitumu clans apply the name of *whare maire* only to schools in which magic arts and such matters were taught. It is sometimes alluded to as a *whare porukuruku*, a name which others use to denote a solitary teaching, as when a man teaches his son or grandson the tribal lore. Some tribes, as those of the Matatua district, apply the name *whare maire* to schools in which tribal history and superior myths were taught. Among the Tuhoe folk the *whare takiura* was a superior School of Learning, and it was from a former scholar of Kahuponia, such a school at Maunga-pohatu, that I gained my first knowledge of the *tapu* lore pertaining to Io. In that and some other districts teaching was conducted at night-time. Prior to a youth commencing to learn *tapu* knowledge he was conducted to a sacred stream or pool, known as the *wai whakaika*, where many ceremonies were performed. A peculiar act in these proceedings was the ceremonial cutting of the hair of the scholars. This was performed by a priestly expert, who used a sharp-edged flake of obsidian for the purpose, while another such expert, taking his stand in the water so as to be spiritually insulated, intoned the *kawa ora* ritual termed *Tiki*. This singular practice of performing rites in water entered into many religious functions of former times. This preparatory performance took place in the evening, and people were warned to remain within their houses while it was in progress. This was a precautionary measure; the intensely *tapu* religious formulae recited might seriously affect, or even destroy, the *wairua* (souls, spirits) of any persons moving abroad. The teaching ceased in the morning

when the *tapu* was lifted from the scholars, in order that they might be free to return to their homes.

In the *whare maire* of the Tuhoe folk were taught tribal history, racial history, myths, &c. Te Kawa a Maui was one of these houses; it was situated near Hana-mahihi, on the Whakatane River.

It were well to explain here that when a Maori speaks of these Schools of Learning he does not necessarily mean that a special house was erected and used as a school, and for that purpose only. This seems to have been the case at Maungawharau, and possibly at a few other places. In most cases, however, the expression "house" (*whare*) was merely a figurative one—or, rather, the term denoted a course of teaching practised at a certain place, a curriculum. Any house used for the purpose of teaching would, however, be *tapu* for the time, and no one would be allowed to enter it save those taking part in the proceedings.

The statements met with concerning the Schools of Learning in the first column of *The Ancient History of the Maori* should be viewed with caution. Separate houses were never set aside for the teaching of different subjects, as astronomy, agriculture, &c. The remarks about the numbers of such houses at page 13 of the original should really be applied to the larger sleeping-huts, not to places of teaching. The information was obtained from the Ngai-Tahu people of the South Island. It may have been a local custom there to admit young children to the teachings, and to partake of meals in the same place, but, if so, there was certainly little *tapu* pertaining to the place or proceedings: it must have been a *whare porukuruku*. Such haphazard and lightsome conduct found no place in North Island schools. Another statement to the effect that a human sacrifice marked the opening of a school could only apply, in the North Island, to the place in which black magic was taught. The Ngai-Tahu scholars are said to have been sprinkled with water by a priest, as they stood in the waters of a stream, ere they entered the school. Also, the priest poured a little water into the left ears of the pupils: this was to "open their ears." Another peculiar act performed was the eating by the scholars of a piece of fern-root (rhizome of *Pteris*) that had been passed under the thigh of an elderly woman who was attached to the house for ceremonial purposes.

The Rev. T. G. Hammond tells us that, in the Taranaki District, the *whare kura* was a house in which tribal lore was taught under *tapu* conditions; while the *whare wananga* was a kindred institution for more advanced or higher teachings than those of the *whare kura*, and it was the more exclusive of the two. Some interesting notes concerning the *are vananga* of Rarotonga may be consulted in Volume 12 of the *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, at page 219. There is a brief account on record of some disintegrating dissension that occurred centuries ago in the *whare kura* at Hawaiki (probably Tahiti) and which led to a dispersal of people, for which see Mr. White's *Lectures*, page 202, and the *Maori History of the Taranaki Coast*, page 143

I have been informed that a School of Learning was formerly an institution in the Marquesas Group. It would appear, however, that the Maori school of New Zealand is the only one concerning which detailed information has been collected.

The term *wananga* is applied to teachings that are held to be *tapu*—occult lore, esoteric knowledge; and *whare wananga* means the *wananga* house, or house of knowledge. This world was originally barren of superior forms of knowledge, hence Tane ascended to the Toi o nga Rangi (the uppermost of the twelve heavens) in order to obtain from Io, the Supreme Being, the three famous *kete o te wananga*, or baskets of knowledge. These three divisions of learning are the following:—

(1.) The *kete aronui:* This represents all knowledge pertaining to good—all things humane, beneficent, desirable, peace, peaceful arts, good will, welfare, human sympathy.

(2.) The *kete tuatea:* This is the basket or repository of evil—the knowledge of all pernicious things; of the art of war, of black magic, of all evil arts, qualities, activities, as pertaining to man, to natural phenomena, to all kingdoms of nature.

(3.) The *kete tuauri:* This is the basket of ritual—the knowledge of all ritual acts and formulae; of all *tapu* ceremonial as connected with all things on earth and in the twelve heavens; likewise the *mana* of all things performed or desired by man.

Such was the prized *wananga*, or occult lore, obtained by Tane from Rangiatea, the *whare wananga* of the Supreme Being. These three "baskets" were preserved within *Whare-kura*, the first of such places in this world. At the same time Tane obtained the two sacred stones known collectively as the Whatukura a Rangi, but separately as the Whatukura a Tane and the Whatukura a Tangaroa. These stones are said to have been endowed with supernatural powers, and to have possessed great *mana* (inherent powers). They were utilized as empowering-agents to impart force, prestige, power, sacredness, and efficiency to ritual ceremonies and chants. Hence they were deposited at the *ahurewa* (or *ahumairangi*) and the *tuahu*—sacred spots at which what may be termed religious ceremonies were performed.

A very singular act was performed in order to obtain small and efficient stones for use in the rites of the School of Learning. Certain small stones were obtained and placed in contact with one of the sacred stones, with the result that they became impregnated with the *tapu* and *mana* (sacredness and inherent powers) of the parent stone. These small stones were employed in certain ceremonial in the School of Learning, as we shall see anon. This belief in the efficiency of contact is a peculiarity of the mind of barbaric man, as also of so-called civilized folk, as witness the evidence of alleged holy relics in Europe. It illustrates a phase of mentality closely akin to that which places faith in sympathetic magic.

As to the three *kete*, or baskets of knowledge, of the neolithic Maori, these are paralleled by the three baskets of sacred lore of the Hindu folk, an expression used to denote their sacred books.

The School of Learning of the Takitumu clans was opened during the winter months only, commencing with the lunar

month of Tikaka-muturangi, and closing in that of Tapere-wai—that is, from April to September. These folk divided the matter taught into three classes, and these three classes of knowledge are spoken of as three different "houses" or "schools" of learning. It was not, however, the case that different buildings were erected, or used, for the teaching of these different subjects. We hear of the arts of black magic being taught out-of-doors in some cases, and that these were not taught in a superior school. It is evident the School of Learning was an institution that differed as to methods, &c., among different tribes. Most of the information in this paper pertains to the School of Learning of the Takitumu tribes—say, the district extending from Wairarapa to Turanga. Here we find that all lore taught in such a school was divided into two primary classes, termed the *kauwae runga* (upper jaw) and the *kauwae raro* (lower jaw). The former includes all learning pertaining to celestial matters, to the Supreme Being and the supernatural denizens of the twelve heavens, with all ritual pertaining thereto; also superior myths, cosmogonic and anthropogenic, &c. All this represents the true esoteric lore. The *kauwae raro* pertains to this world—the *ao marama*, the earth; it includes racial lore and tribal lore, the migration from the homeland, the stirring story of the settling of the Maney-isled Sea, including the discovery and settlement of New Zealand, &c.

Our Takitumu folk classified all impartial knowledge under three "houses," or heads, as follows:—

The *whare wananga:* This term denoted the superior School of Learning and the superior curriculum, the esoteric lore of the *kauwae runga*, the more important matter of the *kete tuauri* and *kete aronui*. All ceremonial concerning the enlightenment of man, the preservation of his spiritual and intellectual welfare, was a special charge of the priestly experts of this institution. These experts did not concern themselves with the lower forms of magic, and there was much of highly sacred ritual connected with the teaching of these matters. The actual teaching, in the form of recitals, or what may be termed lectures, commenced at sunrise, and continued until the sun reached the zenith, when it ceased. It could not be continued after noon, inasmuch as the sinking sun represents decay, dissolution, death. The rising or ascending sun betokens growth, welfare, life, as also does the *kete aronui*, or, as some term it, the *kete uruuru matua*. These have nothing in common with decay and death.

The *whare kau po:* This was the second-grade "house," or series of lectures; and these lectures treated of racial lore, tribal traditions, the wars of old, and other second-class matter. This "house" was open from noon until sunset—that is to say, the lectures were delivered during those hours. Although spoken of as a different "house," yet the teaching was conducted in the same place as was that of superior lore.

The *whare maire:* In the district referred to above this expression denoted third-class matter—the arts of black magic, of the sorcerer, the dreaded *makutu*, including the fell power of slaying man by means of affecting his *wairua*, or spirit. The

warlocks who imparted this pernicious form of knowledge were styled *tohunga ruanuku*, and represented an order inferior to the high-class priestly experts. Such teachings were sometimes conducted out-of-doors, and we are told that they were marked by very unpleasant features. The would-be magician was compelled, ere the teaching began, to swallow some very repulsive matter; and this act seems to have been accepted as a proof that he was prepared to face any ordeal and go to any extreme in order to attain his object.

The teaching of these dread arts by means of which both animal and vegetable life may be destroyed, land rendered infertile, and even stones riven asunder is said to have commenced after sunset and to have been conducted during the darkness. Deeds of darkness are connected with Whiro, and under his gloomy aegis the warlock sought his powers. Should a house be erected or used for the purpose of imparting this form of knowledge, then there was but one talismanic object connected with it—a stone (called a *whatu* when used for this purpose) that was buried at the base of the central support of the ridge-pole, or at some other approved spot. The stone called *mata waiapu* is said to have been used for this purpose by east-coast natives: it is a form of chert found in the bed of the Waiapu River.

Having been initiated into the mysteries of magic, the scholar was compelled to show that he had attained the necessary powers that would enable him to render his ceremonies and spells effective—to show that he had mastered the art of destructive magic, that he possessed the psychic force to affect even inanimate matter. By means of a potent spell, such as that entitled the *Tipi a Houmea*, he had to shatter a stone, blast a living tree, or kill a bird. If successful, he then tried his acquired powers in a final and impressive ordeal, the slaying of a person. For this final test a slave was sometimes brought forward as a victim; but the Maori tells us that in some cases the sorcerer slew one of his own relatives, or the expert who had instructed him, and this was done by means of the vril-like power of magic, of which the recited spell seems to have been the active medium. Such a sacrifice as that of destroying a relative is said to have endowed the new wizard with prestige and *mana*. After paying this price the wizard had shown that he possessed the *mana* that empowers destructive magic, and so he took his stand as a warlock of acknowledged ability.

When a house was specially built to serve as a school of high-class learning—that is, as a *whare wananga*—ceremonial acts entered largely into the procedure, while the prohibitory rules of *tapu* brooded over the site, the work, and the participants therein. In some cases a stone of talismanic import was buried at the base of the main or central post of the rear wall, one of the three supports of the ridge-pole. In other cases two creatures, a lizard and a sparrow-hawk, were so buried. Possibly this latter act may have been a survival of human sacrifice, with the use of a substitute; such a survival is noted in connection with agriculture. These objects so buried seem to have been viewed

as material *mauri*, which are explained in No. 2 of this series of monographs. *Whatu* and *iho* are other terms applied to these objects: their function is a protective one, though the words carry the sense of "core" and "kernel." As the head functionary deposited these mediums in the earth at the base of the post his assistants were engaged in intoning certain ritual chants. A few hairs from the heads of the officiating priestly experts were then cast into the hole, after which earth was shovelled into it, and tamped.

Such a house would not be of a large size, for the scholars would not be numerous. The first person to enter the house after its completion would be the principal expert connected with the prized *wananga*. The term *whatu* was also applied to this wise man. One of his first acts was to deposit at the base of the rearmost post supporting the ridge-pole a number of small stones. This spot, in such a *tapu* House of Learning, was known as the *ahurewa*, which is one of the forms of *tuahu* (syn. *ahu*)—special places at which sacred ceremonies were performed. The Maori never erected any form of structure to serve as an altar; no worked stone ever marked such a place—nothing more than a rough unworked stone, or stones, set up with their bases in the earth. Neither did he erect any form of temple; and the *whare wananga* was the only building, so far as I am aware, in which a form of *ahu* was instituted, and in which important religious rites were performed. All other such places were situated outside: the Maori ever preferred to conduct his ceremonies in the open.

Now, the *ahurewa* is the most *tapu* place in such a house, and here its priestly expert, the *tohunga ahurewa*, performed his rites. The small stones referred to above were employed for a singular purpose. One was given to each pupil who attended a course of lectures, and each scholar placed the little stone in his mouth, and there retained it while listening to the recitals of the teachers, or, as we may put it, the lectures of the School of Learning. Some differences in methods, as in different districts, will be noted anon.

Prior to youths and young men being permitted to enter for the course of instruction, their powers of memorizing matter from a single recital were tested. Certain *korero purakau* (legendary stories), such as the popular versions of the Maui myths, were repeated to them. These tales the would-be scholars repeated before the experts, and those who possessed the most retentive memories were selected as scholars for the School of Learning —that is, as repositories, conservers, and promulgators of the unwritten archives of the community. These men were the Polynesian substitute for written documents and printed books.

The ordinary term employed to denote a scholar is *akonga;* but other expressions were applied to pupils in the School of Learning. Thus, a neophyte was called a *pia;* one further advanced was styled a *taura;* while one who had acquired the *wananga* was a *tauira*. The expressions *pu*, *pu korero*, *pu wananga*, and *putea rauroha* were employed to describe a past master, a repository of tribal lore. All learned persons were

necessarily *tohunga*, because that term simply means "expert, adept"; but such a man would not necessarily practise the calling of a priestly expert. An expert carpenter or tattooer is a *tohunga;* the term is not confined to priests or shamans, as is commonly believed among Europeans.

When about to enter the *tapu* house of learning pupils were compelled to discard their garments at some distance from the place, enter the same in a state of nudity, and don certain others that were kept inside the house. When leaving the house at the conclusion of the morning's lectures, a reverse procedure was gone through. All this was on account of the intense *tapu* of the place, and of the subjects and proceedings. For the same reason no woman was allowed to enter the building; while its *marae*, or environs, also represented a prohibited area while the school was open.

In some cases a series of eleven unworked stones of considerable size was procured, and these were partially embedded in the earthen floor of the house to be used as seats. Eight of them were situated near the base of the rearmost post of the ridge-pole, four on either side of it. The other three were set up farther forward in the house, near the fire-pit. The eight seats were occupied by scholars, while the three stones near the fire-pit were for the accommodation of the three teaching experts. These seats may have been a mere local peculiarity; the evidence seems to show that they by no means represented a common usage. The number of seats would apparently limit the number of scholars to eight, but only a comparative few would ever be taught the superior lore of a community, and the School of Learning was not conducted every year. The use of the seats may have been a rare ceremonial usage; otherwise the Maori was not given to the use of raised seats.

The conservative Maori was somewhat particular as to what persons acquired his superior lore, hence it was imparted only to members of families of some standing in the community. Youths of the lower-class families were not allowed to acquire such learning. The *whare wananga* was a conservative institution.

When the scholars had entered the house one of the teachers proceeded to intone an invocation to Ruatau, Rehua, and Paoa, three supernatural beings who are denizens of celestial regions. This chant was commenced just as the first rays of the morning sun reached the house, which faced the east. Tane was the bringer of all occult lore to mankind, and so he is the tutelary being connected with knowledge and with the *whare wananga*. It was also Tane who, in the form of the sun, gave the signal for the opening of the School of Learning. This act of waiting for the rising sun carries the mind back to Persian armies on the march in days of long ago. When the first rays of the rising sun struck the crystal globe, enclosing a golden image of the sun, fixed on the king's pavilion, the daily march began. First went the chariot with the altar and the sacred fire, even as, among our Maori folk, the emblem of the tribal war-god was carried by a priestly expert in the van of a marching armed force, while the food-bearers

brought up the rear. This usage is described in the old saying "*Ko te amorangi ki mua, ko te hapai o ki muri.*"

The expert, standing by the rearmost pillar at the rear wall of the house, so awaited the rays of the rising sun ere commencing the recital of his ritual formulae. His second recital was the long *pure* chant. This was an invocation to Io, the Supreme Being, asking that the scholars might be enabled to acquire and firmly retain the sacred teaching. The language of these formulae is exceedingly archaic and abstruse, containing many otherwise obsolete expressions, peculiar sacerdotal words and phrases. The final part of the last-mentioned invocation is as follows :—

"Enter deeply, enter to the very source, into the very foundations of all knowledge, O Io of the Hidden Face! Gather into the very base of the ears of thy neophytes, thy sons, the desired knowledge. Let thy thoughts, thy knowledge, descend on them to the very foundations of the mind, O Io the Wise! O Io of all holy knowledge! O Io the Parentless!"

During this recital the priest struck the main post near him with his hand. This ritual brought the house, its inmates, and the proceedings under intense *tapu*—so much so that, until it was removed, the high gods of the Maori pantheon might be said to have been present in the house. It was an invoking of the principal deity to aid the scholars to grasp the teachings with facility, to render them clear-minded, and their memories retentive.

When Te Matorohanga opened a School of Learning in the Wairarapa for the last time, in 1865, he waited until the scholars had entered the house, then took a mouthful of water, ejected it into his left hand, then sprinkled it on the house. He then intoned the formula referred to above, and at the conclusion of the recital said: "Such is the end of the ritual, and we may congratulate ourselves on the fact that the repetition was faultless, no error being made." He then commenced his series of narrations of the lore of his tribe. His remark was an allusion to the belief that any error made in the recital of such a sacred recital entirely destroyed its efficiency, nullified its powers beyond recall. Moreover, such an occurrence would probably cause the death of the reciter. The gods who live for ever are not to be annoyed with impunity!

The scholars entering for the session were asked as to which "baskets" of knowledge they desired to acquire—that is, which class of matter they wished to learn. The lectures pertaining to the different classes were delivered in a regular manner. The first matter taught was that included in the term *kauwae runga*, which means the contents of the *aronui* and *tuauri* "baskets"; and the former was the first one opened. When these lectures were concluded, then the matters pertaining to the *kauwae raro* (affairs of this world) were taught. A scholar might desire to acquire the contents of but one of the famed baskets of knowledge.

When three experts took part in the teaching, two of them would act as prompters (*kaituruki*) to the one speaking. The scholars and teachers all fasted until the day's teaching was over:

this was considered to be quite a necessary feature of the function.

When the course of lectures was concluded, then the examination of the pupils commenced. In one account we are told that the scholar being examined in the superior lore of the *aronui* took his seat on one of the three stones in the centre of the house, while those who were being examined in secondary matter occupied the stone seats at the rear end of the house. Other accounts, however, make no mention of any seats. It was at this juncture that, in some schools, an expert obtained the small stones from the rear end of the house, and placed one in the mouth of each scholar. These stones had acquired *mana* (force, inherent powers) by means of contact with the talismanic stone of the house, as already explained.

The pupils were required to repeat such matter as had been given in the course of the lecture they had attended. Those who showed proficiency, who repeated the matter orally acquired with correctness, now had the final ceremony performed over them. At this time a singular act was performed by one of the expert lecturers. He plucked a hair from the head of each pupil, obtained a little dust from their bare feet, a modicum of their saliva, and buried all in the earth near the rear post of the house. The object of this procedure was to render the scholars invulnerable to the shafts of black magic, and to enable them to retain acquired knowledge, to prevent it being filched from them by charlatans.

Certain formulae were recited over the scholars who had passed successfully through the test of examination, and, as usual, such matter had to be repeated without break or pause, hence two experts took part in the intoning of the ritual. The chief expert would commence the recital, and continue it so long as his breath held out. The moment that he stopped, possibly in the middle of a sentence, or even of a word, then his assistant took up the recital at the next syllable, and carried it on without any perceptible break in continuity. Natives are expert at this *kapo* process, as it is termed.

To each scholar who had acquired with credit the superior lore of the *kete aronui* was given a stone, called *whatu kairangi*, which may be viewed as a certificate of proficiency, a diploma of the Stone Age. The recipient retained this for life. The stone placed in the mouth of a scholar was known as a *whatu whangai*. Yet another, termed a *whatu whakahoro*, was a diminutive piece of stone placed in a scholar's mouth during the performance of a certain rite, and which he had to swallow, as the name implies. Of this matter more anon.

The names of the various stones employed in these ceremonies, and perhaps also the purpose for which they were used, seem to have differed as in different districts, a fact that leads to confusion. In 1876 Topia Turoa made some interesting remarks concerning the stones used in the Whanganui district. He mentioned three such—the *whatu puororangi*, the *whatu kai manawa*, and the *whatu whakatara*. Of the first-mentioned he remarked: "This stone will enable you to retain your knowledge, lest it

be appropriated by others, and it will also prevent you unwisely disseminating such knowledge. At such times as you deem it necessary you place it in your mouth, on the left side, and there let it lie, but, ere you do so, repeat this charm . . . As to the *whatu kai manawa*, place it in your vest-pocket ere you join an assembly of strangers, a good plan is to secure it within the lining of that garment. Now, about the *whatu whakatara*: place this beneath your pillow when you retire to rest, that it may beneficially affect your *mauri* (life-principle). Now, when about to commence to learn the *tapu* lore of your ancestors, repeat the following formula over the stone:—

Here is my *mauri*, thy *mauri*, O Io the Parent!
Here is my *mauri*, the *mauri* of Tupai.
Here is my *mauri*, the *mauri* of Tane.
Here is my *mauri*, the *mauri* of Tu-matauenga.
Here is my *mauri*, the *mauri* of the *tipua*.
Here is my *mauri*, the *mauri* of the gods. &c.

Having concluded your recital, place the stone in your mouth, leave it there a space, then take it out and put it away. You then swallow the saliva in your mouth, and commence your learning."

The following are yet other names applied to such stones employed in the School of Learning: *Whatu kai apoapo; whatu tahurewa; whatu ariki; whatu kai tangata.*

Although these names differ to the point of confusion, yet the point ever stressed is the ability of such *mana*-possessing stones to protect the life-principle of the scholars and to render their acquired knowledge permanent.

Years ago the writer was granted the privilege of examining the collection of stones employed for some of the above purposes at the old-time *whare wananga* at Maunga-wharau. They are flattened, smooth-surfaced stones, evidently water-worn, some circular, others of somewhat ovoid form, and about 1 in. in width. One was of a jetty-black colour, while the others much resembled pieces of water-worn carnelian I once saw, and which, if memory serves me, had been procured at Cabbage Bay, Hauraki Peninsula.

An interesting form of the final ceremony performed over a scholar was conducted in the flowing waters of a stream, where, in native belief, man is less liable to be affected by evil influences than at any other place. This was assuredly a singular performance. A small piece of stone, the *whatu whakahoro* aforementioned, was placed upon the tongue of the scholar as he stood in the flowing waters on the left side of the priestly expert. The latter then placed his left hand on the head of the scholar, as they both faced the rising sun that is the very lord and genius of knowledge, the personified form of which brought knowledge of occult lore into this world. With his right hand the priest pointed at the ascending sun as he intoned an invocation to the Supreme Being, to Tane, to Ruatau, Rangi, and Pawa. Tane is the personified form of the sun, Rangi the Sky Parent, while Ruatau and Pawa are two important celestial beings. One of

the principal objects of this function was to "bind" the acquired learning of the scholar, to render it permanent. At the recital of the words "O Io the Parent! O Ruatau! O Tane-te-waiora!" the scholar swallowed the small stone. The following is the invocation recited by the priest:—

Tenei to aro, tenei to pia;
He aro matua, he pia nau, e Rangi!
He aro nou, e Ruatau!
He pia nau, e Tane te wananga a Ruatau . . . e!
Te wananga a Rangi . . . e.

Heuea te uruuru whenua,
Heuea te uruuru makinokino;
Hurumanu ki tenei taura,
Huru marire ki tenei pia nau, e Pawa . . . e.

Rukutia, rukutia i te putake o nga korero,
Rukutia i te wananga kia heke i to ara;
He ara te ihonga, he ara te whiroa,
He ara to ngakengakenga ki te pu.
Kia tamaua ki te hiringa i roto,
Kia tawhia ki te hiringa matua,
Kia whanake i te pu te hiringa tawhito ururangi,
Kia whanake i roto i te koronga te hiringa tipua,
Kia whanake i te iho to hiringa, e Ruatau . . . e!

Te hiringa i te mahara, te hiringa i te wananga nau,
E Tane te wananga a Rangi-tikitiki . . . e . . . i!

Puritia i te ioio nui, i te ioio o te pukenga,
I te ioio o te hiringa wananga tipua,
I te wananga ariki, i te wananga atua,
No runga i nga rangi tuhaha.
No te uruuru tahito, no te uruuru tipua,
No te uruuru matua ki a koe, e Io-matua . . . e!
E Ruatau! e Tane te waiora . . . e . . . i!

Na, ka horomia te kowhatu i roto i te waha o te taura ra i tenei tonu, na, ka mea ano te tohunga (at this precise juncture the stone in the mouth of the scholar was swallowed, and the priest proceeded):—

Oi whiwhia, oi rawea, oi tamaua
Te ueue tipua, te ueue rangi, te ueue kaha,
Te ueue atua te take i roto.
E tipu to aro, e tipu o mahara,
E tipu, e rea ki te whaiao, ki te ao marama . . . e.
He pukenga tipua, he koronga atua
Whiroa i roto te pukenga
Whiwhia i roto te hiringa atua nou,
E Tane ki to aro . . . e . . . i!

This formula, addressed to the gods, was believed to have the effect of stabilizing the acquired knowledge of the pupil. The assistance of those gods was asked for to that end, and they were asked to endow the scholar with intelligence, they hold the power to render such acquirements permanent.

All *tohunga ahurewa* (priestly experts and teachers of the superior School of Learning) were extremely *tapu* persons, especially so the *whatu*, or chief expert of the institution. Te

Matorohanga, of Wai-rarapa, who gave much of the information contained in this paper, was one of the last teachers of that district. He was long under the influence of such *tapu*, and, indeed, never entirely abandoned it. For a long time he was unable to take a meal without assistance, inasmuch as the excessive *tapu* prevented him touching food with his hands, hence his sister was ever in attendance upon him, and always placed the food in his mouth. He would never enter a store, or any European's house, so many polluting objects and usages being encountered in such places. He was an enthusiastic star-gazer, and would spend hours during fine, clear nights in closely observing the movements and aspect of the heavenly bodies. A man of remarkable and highly interesting mentality, though by no means *persona grata* with the missionaries. The story of his death is one of the most interesting recitals ever heard by the writer.

The term *ahorangi* was sometimes employed to denote the chief expert of a superior School of Learning, and so Tupai, of Whare-kura, at far-distant Irihia, was known as Tupai te Ahorangi. He is said to have been the first to perform the extraordinary rite termed *ngau paepae*.

At the "breaking-up" of our School of Learning certain ceremonies observed differed as in different districts. The following account of such proceedings was obtained from a member of the Kahungunu Tribe.

Ere the school dispersed it was deemed highly necessary to remove the *tapu* of gods and proceedings from the scholars. This ceremony was performed at the *turuma* (latrine) pertaining to the school, where the scholars went through the motion of biting the *paepae*, or horizontal beam, of the erection: hence the name of *ngau paepae*, by which the ceremony was known. This strange act was accompanied by the recital of a certain formula by a priest, and the object of the procedure was a protective one. At its conclusion the scholars immersed their bodies in the waters of a stream.

The scholars then returned to the school and grouped themselves within the porch thereof, facing outwards. The head teacher, standing on the *marae*, or clear space before the house, then addressed the youths, congratulating them upon their success, and their behaviour while under tuition. He also gave them much advice as to their demeanour and actions in the future. The possession of extremely *tapu* knowledge always contained an element of danger in Maori belief.

Teachers and scholars then left the house in the form of a procession, the former leading. On arriving at the outer bounds of the plaza, or *marae*, the procession halted, all the members thereof turning and facing the *whare wananga*. One of the teaching experts now proceeded to generate fire by friction in the well-known Polynesian manner. This was an *ahi tapu* (sacred fire), and all such ceremonial fires had to be so generated. New, unsullied fire was essential; no brands from another fire might be utilized. As this act was being performed another of the priestly experts busied himself in intoning a *tapu* chant appro-

priate to the occasion. The prominent feature of this final function was the performance by the principal expert of the highly important, not to say marvellous, rite of *oho rangi*. This act, which was nothing less than causing thunder to resound, was viewed as the culminating performance of the session, inasmuch as it not only proved the *mana* of the performer, but also imparted the same necessary quality to the whole of the proceedings of the session. This implied power over the forces of nature as possessed by high-class *tohunga* was a matter of abiding faith in the Maori mind, and apparently still is in many cases. In the above-mentioned district one of the two forms of thunder known as *puororangi* and *te rangi whakarara* was called upon in these necromantic rites. The former has a rumbling sound, while the latter is marked by sharp detonations

The scholars then divested themselves of their sacerdotal garments and proceeded to the place where their ordinary clothing had been left. They resumed this, and were then free to return to their homes, to mingle with the village community and take part in the life thereof.

The final session of the School of Learning in the Wai-rarapa district was marked by the employment of written language, the students writing the matter down. This innovation was by no means approved of by the dour old expert teachers, who looked upon it with a good deal of contempt. From their point of view it was unnecessary. The books in which the scholars wrote down the matter of the lectures were alluded to as *putea whakairo* (repositories of crabbed markings).

At the conclusion of the session the *tapu* had to be removed from these manuscript books, and this was effected by means of a ceremonial performance termed *umu whakahoro*. The expert made a small hole, about 6 in. across, in the earthen floor of the house in which the tribal lore had been recited. He then heated some small stones in a fire outside the house, and conveyed these hot stones to the hole, wherein he deposited them. He arranged some green herbage on the stones, placed some diminutive potatoes on the green stuff, and then more such herbage. Water was then sprinkled over all, so that it would percolate through to the hot stones, and so produce the necessary steam. The pit was then carefully covered so as to prevent the escape of steam. When he judged the potatoes to be cooked, the expert demanded the manuscript books of the students, and piled them at his right side. He then uncovered the little steam-oven, and took the uppermost book, that of Henare Matua, at the same time bidding its owner come forward. He held the book in his right hand, and took one of the small cooked potatoes in his left hand. He put the potato into Henare's left hand, and the book into his right hand. He served all the scholars in like manner, and then told them to *whakaha* their books. This word means "to breathe," but in this ceremonial usage it denotes the placing of the mouth close to an object, the act being accompanied by an intake of the breath. By means of this act a person inherited or absorbed the knowledge and *mana* of a dying man. In this case the

inhaler placed his mouth close to the head of the dying person.

In the above case four inspirations were apparently made by each scholar. As the first one was made the expert intoned the words "*He toi nui*"; at the second, "*He toi roa*"; at the third, "*He toi whakaputa*"; and at the fourth, "*Nau, e Io o Tikitiki o Rangi!*" He then bade the students consume the potatoes they held in their hands.

Then, with hands upraised in the manner adopted by Brahmin priests, the old sage stood, gazing upward apparently at the ridge-pole of the house, as he chanted the final formula of the last session of the *whare wananga* of his ancestors:—

"Tenei o pia, tenei o taura
He iho nui, he iho roa, he iho taketake ki a koe, e Io . . . e!
Pokia he tamaua take, rokia he tamaua take
Ki enei pia, ki enei tama
He toi nui, he toi roa, he toi whakaputa nau, e Io matua . . . e!
Ki taiao, ki te ao marama ki a koe, e Io . . . e!"

When intoning the above invocatory formula the old expert assumed a peculiar attitude. He stood with his elbows to his sides, but with forearms extended, and with the cupped hands held palms uppermost. The repetition of the formula was thought to be necessary in order to enable the scholars to retain the verbal teachings. It had, however, been evolved long centuries before for the "binding" of knowledge orally acquired, not for *putea whakairo*, the crabbed meanderings of a marking-stick.

In the case of *tapu*-removing ceremonial described above, one of the scholars declined to have lifted from his book and himself the excess of *tapu* that is so dangerous to human life. He took his book home with him, with the *tapu* of the gods upon it, to the haunts of man, where pernicious influences are ever present. He built a special hut in which to keep that dangerous book; he placed the book in a box which he suspended by means of a rope from the ridge-pole. All were warned not to interfere with the hut. The sequel to this relation was a startling one, for in three brief months the owner of the book was insane, in four he was dead. It was in this wise: He was consulting his book one day when he chanced to be called outside by Tamaroto. When he returned he found that some children had entered the hut, and were partaking of food on the sacred box. There could be but one result of this appalling mischance, and that result came swiftly. The gods who live for ever—the hidden force behind the institution of *tapu*—are not to be insulted with impunity; so says the Maori.

The stone "certificate of proficiency" handed to a successful student was sometimes alluded to as a *whatu tamaua take*, and in the year 1914 four such stones were still in the possession of natives of the Whanganui district. The late *pu wananga*, or expert, Te Riaki, of Karioi, was one of the past masters of occult lore. Three others, of the eastern districts, were Ngatoro-i-rangi, Nepia Pohuhu, and Mohi Ruatapu. These latter were by no means so conservative as Te Riaki and Te Matorohanga, men of superior

principles, and ever averse to allowing Europeans to acquire any knowledge of the prized lore of which they were the final repositories. Of Tu-raukawa, of Taranaki, the writer knows little, and has acquired but a few items from his stores of knowledge. Other experts of eastern districts were Karauria Ngawhara, Paratene, Mohi Tautapa, and Whakahaurangi. Rihari Tohi and Pehoro te Tio were also men of much knowledge, though perhaps not the equals in that respect of the persons named above. These experts admitted the superior status of Te Matorohanga in their various addresses.

One of these experts described a variant form of the final ceremony performed over a successful scholar within the house of learning. This was the school in which the stone seats were used. The scholar was told to seat himself on one of the stones at the rear part of the house. He was handed a stone styled a *whatu turuki*, which he placed between his open hands, and so held it by means of pressing his hands together; holding his hands up before him as he sat on the stone seat. While in this singular position a certain formula was recited over him. He was then told to rise, and another small stone was placed on the seat, and on this he was told to again seat himself. Then, on either side of him, a priestly expert took his stand, each of whom stretched forth a hand so as to just touch the head of the scholar. A third expert then intoned certain ritual that, in Maori belief, enabled the scholar to retain his newly-won knowledge. This refers not only to any loss through failing memory, but also to such loss through divers dangers and evil influences that ever exist, more especially in the superstitious minds of barbaric man. It was at this juncture that the stone "certificate" was handed to the scholar. It is in these barbaric practices that we see the origin of much of the mummery noted in divers cults and societies of modern life.

One authority has stated that all scholars who passed the examination test took their places on the right side—that is, the northern side—of the house, while those who failed went over to the other side. It is also said that the latter were granted another opportunity to memorize the lectures. Presumably this would be during the next session of the *whare wananga*.

As observed, the great aim of the School of Learning was to hand the teachings of old down succeeding generations in an unchanged form. Any deviation from such teachings was a thing to be carefully avoided. To deny the truth of any such teachings was viewed as an abominable act. As a worthy old sage remarked to one he had taught, "O son! Retain firmly the prized lore I have imparted to you. Your ancestors ever carefully conserved it within the *wananga* house. Should any person condemn or deny the knowledge I have passed on to you, then may the sun wither him, may the moon consign him to the pit of darkness. He is not condemning me, but Tane the Parent, from whom this sacred knowledge was derived."

Persons who had acquired the *wananga* were ever urged to be extremely careful as to the repetition of such matter. Formulae and other matter pertaining to the superior cult of

Io might be recited only in the presence of those acquainted with it; ordinary people were not allowed to hear it. Certain other matter might be recited or discussed only among members of the home community. Great care was displayed in any discussion before a mixed audience, or members of other tribes.

The following remarks were culled from advice given by an expert who had handed to a scholar his stone diploma: "Preserve carefully the stone I gave you when I performed the *pure* rite over you. Do not part with it. Should you do so, then shall you be as an empty house, a place having no occupants. Now, should you rise to speak among an assembly of persons, place the stone in your mouth, lest you be tampered with by evilly disposed persons. Follow my advice, and truly you shall be as a *toiora*, retaining all forms of welfare, and nought save old age shall take you hence." The same authority remarked to a person who had asked him to teach him the old tribal lore, "I cannot disclose to you the *tapu* lore of the *kauwae runga* and *kauwae raro*. Such matter must be taught in a house set aside and made *tapu* for that purpose only. No food can be taken into such a place, and the teaching must cease at noon, to be continued the next day."

Mr. T. W. Downes has collected some interesting notes from Hawera Rehe as pertaining to the myth concerning the two sacred *whatu*, or stones, of Tane and Tangaroa. These two revered stones were deposited in Whare-kura. In after-times Tane reclaimed one of these stones in order that he might obtain the assistance of its strange powers in controlling his realm. Tangaroa utilized the other stone as an empowering agent in his great task of controlling the ocean. It was, however, necessary that two other stones should be sought to serve as substitutes for the two *whatu* in Whare-kura. Hence two white stones were obtained and placed in contact with the two sacred stones, where they were left for seven days and nights. Thus did they acquire *mana*.

Certain sacred stones were brought to New Zealand by Polynesian immigrants in past times. The term *whatu kura* is also applied to such stones as these.

When the teaching of the ancient *wananga* was resumed for a while in the Wai-rarapa district, in the middle "sixties," two of the old sacred stones were employed. Early each morning, ere the teaching commenced, the expert placed one of these stones in the palm of a pupil's hand. The other pupils then placed their hands over the stone, one above the other, and so stood as the expert recited a certain formula. After this each pupil held the other stone in his mouth, one after the other, while another formula was intoned by the expert. The lectures then commenced, and were continued until noon.

The Ra-wheoro School at Uawa was reopened for a session after the fight at Toka-a-kuku in 1836. The directing experts were Toki Puanga, Rangi-uia, and Mohi Ruatapu, while Te Matorohanga, of Wai-rarapa, was present. An inferior school was open about the same period at Okura-a-renga; it was conducted by one Toiroa. The year 1865 marked the last session

of a School of Learning in the Wai-rarapa district, and 1868 saw the last teaching in the South Island, so far as we are aware.

Among the older generation of natives I have noted much sentimental regard for the *whare wananga* of their ancestors, and regret for the abandonment of that revered institution in these days of the white man. As one old survivor of a lost past remarked, "I mourn over the bequest of our ancestors and of our elders." It was an allusion to the system of conserving prized lore that had continued for many centuries, from the mist-enshrouded land of Irihia to the isles of Aotea-roa that lie within the *ao marama*.

Apart from the ordered and impressive functions and activities of the superior School of Learning, there was a good deal of teaching of second-class matter to individuals, as when a man instructed his son or grandson in tribal history, and what may be termed professional or craft charms, such as were employed in all pursuits of man. Such instruction was often carried on out-of-doors, occasionally in a temporary hut that would be burned at the conclusion of the lessons. Dieffenbach tells us how he once saw an old native teaching a youth. They were seated under a tree, and the lad "listened attentively to the repetition of certain words, which seemed to have no meaning, but which it must have required a good memory to retain in their due order. At the old man's side was part of a man's skull filled with water; into this from time to time he dipped a green branch, which he moved over the boy's head."

One of the late Mr. John White's notes gives some explanation of certain performances attending such inferior modes of teaching: "My grandfather, he who taught me, first took me to a stream, and bade me dip my hands in the water as he repeated a charm. The object of this performance was to ascertain whether or not I was suffering any disability, as from impending danger, or some act of my own or others that might have affected my well-being. In order to ascertain the conditions, and to ascertain what person, if any, was endangering my life, my elder proceeded as follows: He fashioned from bulrush-leaves a small figure in human form. Within this he placed a stone to serve as a kernel or heart, and then deposited the object at the edge of the water, sticking beside it a small branch. We then stood together, quite naked, at the waterside, my elder at my right side. He then bade me expectorate. He caught the saliva in his left hand, which he slapped on his right cheek. Now, if any person had been attempting to harm me (by magic arts) his *wairua* (spirit) would have appeared at that moment. In that case my elder would have slain the offender (by counter-spells). At the conclusion of each lesson my elder kindled a fire by friction, and bade me roast a piece of fern-root thereat. He then told me to touch his head and shoulders with the roasted root as he stood facing the east. I then handed him the root, which he ate. This performance lifted the *tapu* from both of us."

It appears that an attendant was employed during each session of the *whare wananga*, he being known as a *takuahi*. His

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tasks were to attend to the fire in the house, to procure any water needed for ceremonial purposes, or any other necessary duty.

Canon Stack tells us that the School of Learning was known as the *whare purakau* in the South Island. He renders this term as "armoury"; but in this case it denotes a house of legendary lore—the word *purakau* bearing the meaning of "legend, myth." This writer tells us that the teaching commenced, with much ceremony, at the beginning of winter, the date being fixed by the rising of the star Puanga (Rigel in Orion): this would be the heliacal rising of that star. The teaching continued for about three months, and was, as elsewhere, in connection with the gods, origin myths, ritual, historical traditions, genealogies, star-lore, &c.

Mr. Beattie, who has collected some interesting, albeit fragmentary, notes on the teaching system and origin of South Island natives, mentions three names as pertaining to that isle—the *whare kura* and *whare purakau*, in which were taught historical traditions, the arts of agriculture and war, while the *whare tohunga* was for teaching the arts of magic. Presumably ritual matters formed a part of the curriculum of the two first-mentioned places.

In the foregoing sketch of the objects, scope, and methods of the School of Learning of the neolithic Maori we observe the intense respect manifested by a barbaric folk for what they deemed to be high-class knowledge. So strong was this feeling among the ancestors of the Maori that they built up the very remarkable institution termed the *whare wananga*, although they attributed its origin to the Supreme Being. This, however, is by no means the only matter in regard to which responsibility has been placed upon Divine shoulders. In much less creditable lines of activity man has ever had a pleasant little habit of attributing them to his gods.

The Maori hedged his prized esoteric lore around with many restrictions, with much *tapu*. He would not allow it to be vulgarized, nor his superior concept of the Supreme Being to be degraded by inferior minds. In one way only could these aims be obtained, and that way he adopted. Such knowledge was retained in the hands of the few. The grosser minds of the community, they who craved gods of the swashbuckler type, and demons to empower magic spells, were referred to minor beings, personified forms of natural phenomena and ancestral spirits. Those whose mentality lifted them to higher quests, who could appreciate superior concepts, and were capable of introspective thought, had reached the truly Oriental conception of the Universal Spirit, the One in Many, never more aptly expressed than it was by the old sage Pohuhu, of Kahungunu: "*Kotahi tonu te wairua o nga mea katoa*" ("There is but one soul of all things").

The human mind has ever been perplexed by the existence of evil in the world, and has evolved some quaint ideas as to its origin. It may be asked, Why did Io send down to this world the Basket of Evil? This is a question that no man may answer; but, even as the neophyte of the *whare wananga* chooses the "baskets" of knowledge that he desires to acquire, even

so must each man on earth choose for himself the good or the evil.

In these disjointed notes I have endeavoured to give some evidence of the trend of the mentality of the Maori, of his quest for the source of knowledge, and of his endeavours to preserve superior knowledge. They have been culled from many conversations with brown-skinned friends of former days, when our school of learning was a comfortless picquet tent, a rude hut in lone places of the land or forest solitudes, or where Kahuponia, the last of the *whare takiura*, crouched on the rugged shoulder of Hine-maunga, who guards the ancient burial caves of the Children of the Mist.

The compilation of these notes from many shabby old notebooks recalls many pleasant hours spent in those rough bush camps, around many a cheery camp-fire, or on the rock-bound shores of the Star Lake, where Te Kakau and Matariki on high marked the passing hours of nightly meetings: nights in lone camps, spent, not with nice men, mark you, but with the savage bushmen of the outlands—the Dogs of Pohokorua; the men who committed the Poverty Bay and Mohaka massacres; past masters in ferocity.

The Maori mind is no easy field for exploration: nought save patience and a sympathetic demeanour can turn the revealing key; lacking these qualities the seeker will fail, delve he never so bravely. Yet truly is the field worth working, for in it are buried the fossilized mental phenomena of the grey centuries. The derelict neolith before you was lifting a well-defined trail when we were blazing our first rude path; he was ranging vast ocean-spaces when we, with anxious hearts, poled a rude dugout across the raging Thames. When we bowed before blood-stained, beer-swilling gods, he had evolved the concept of a Supreme Being of beneficent aspect, and that of the *awe* of the *wairua*, the refined wraith of the human soul.

The barbaric Maori, the heathen of the ages, had his questing hand ever on the pulse of Nature. He sought to pierce the fragile *wharangi rau angiangi*, that forms the frail barrier between *tai-ao* and *tai-whetuhi*, the realms of life and death, this world and the spirit-world. He strove to ascertain the origin of natural phenomena, to peer behind the veil and to control them by virtue of occult powers. He raised his voice in potent charms, and that of Hine-whaitiri, the Thunder Maid, responded from the echoing heavens. He commanded Tane and Pale Hina to bear his messages to far lands, and the solar and lunar halos delivered them; for these be the *kura hau awatea* and the *kura hau po*. He harnessed Kahukura, the rainbow, as a deep-sea pilot; he placed Tunui, the mysterious comet, at the head of his fighting-forces; he haled his gods from sea, and land, and the sky above, and bade them serve him.

The *tohunga* of Tahiti caused a breadfruit-tree to grow and mature in brief time-space before onlookers. The sage of Mokoia Isle is said to have challenged a certain missionary to prove the *mana* of his deity, when, before his startled eyes, he turned a withered *Cordyline* leaf into a fresh green one. Moreover, we

are assured that the Maori warlock could shatter a stone, blast a living tree, kill a bird on the wing, or slay a person, by the exercise of his will-power, backed up by psychic force and a recital of a spell of the dreaded *makutu*. Ask me not as to the truth of these marvels, but of a verity the Maori has full faith in them, and *my* task is but to record *his* beliefs.

The mentality of the Maori is of a very strange quality. He is not of us, nor yet of our time; he is the Oriental mystic; he is a survival from a past age. Like the *moa* of his own land, he is passing away; he has fulfilled his task in forming the mysterious chain of progress of which no man may count the links. Ever his mythopoetic mind turn his memory back to olden lands and olden times; ever he greets old *Terra Mater* who brought him forth to the world of life, and to whom he returns when, stricken down by dark Whiro and Maiki-nui, he fares out upon the golden way of Tane in obedience to the oldest of all instincts and all quests.

Such is the Maori—he of the generation I know, the men among whom I spent long years of pleasant life. As to the outlook of the younger generation of natives, we will leave that question for the days that lie before.

In a speech of lamentation made by a pundit of Takitumu some sixty years ago is noted a deep regret at the passing of the *whare wananga* of his ancestors. For that revered House of Learning has gone for ever. It has passed away even as the rarefied form of Hine-kapua, the Cloud Maid, passes from the vast realm of Watea. That highly *tapu* institution that had existed from the days when the gods walked the earth, instituted by Io the Parent in celestial regions, brought from hidden lands beyond the far-spread realm of Hine-moana, carried on from island unto island at the gateways of the day, had at last, after many centuries, been lost to man here at the ends of the earth. When the *whare wananga* closed its door for the last time the world-worn Children of Pani knew that never more would they regain the *tapu* of the *ira atua* (divine life), that the *mana* (prestige) of their race had gone for ever.

In the remote centuries that lie behind the Maori left the lost land of Irihia far away beneath the setting sun. He fared out into the great Pacific and held his prow on the *ra kura*, the ruddy sun of the eastern horizon. He relied on Kopu, and Whanui, and all the Children of Light to guide him over darkling seas; he felt the lure of Hine-moana, the Sea Maid, who beckons from the vast solitudes of Mahora-nui-atea. He knew, and feared not, the dangers that await the compassless voyager on lone seas, as shown in a saying as old as the days of Toi the Sea-rover, he who rode out from Rarotonga on five hundred leagues of rolling sea roads, saying, "I will reach the mist-enshrouded land of Aotea-roa, or be engulped in the depths of Hine-moana."

Even so the courageous old pathfinders went down into unknown regions and opened up the dark places of the earth. And when their forebears called to them from the spirit-world, it was then that Tane-te-waiora laid down the *ara whanui*, the Golden Way, the spirit-path, athwart the heaving breast of Hine-

moana—to guide them back to the loved homeland they had left in the days when the world was young. And there, at Te Hono-i-wairua, the most sacred place on earth, at the meeting-place of the wondrous Four-way Path, the worn old pioneers of the Pacific find rest at last.

And we who yet abide in the world of life know that never again will the gallant old Polynesian voyagers list to the lure of Hine-moana, never more feel the swaying of the long steer-oars as she throws the lilting leagues astern, and never in all time retrace their way along the Broad Path of Tane that leads to the spirit-world. As the men of old said, "*He ropu maomao ka taka i Awhea, e kore a muri e hokia*" ("A shoal of *maomao* that has passed Awhea will never return").

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